

CM/ECF: THE FUTURE ON YOUR DESKTOP

U.S. Bankruptcy Court - District of Vermont

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Progress Report on CM/ECF

When does CM/ECF go on-line?

That is the question the United States Bankruptcy Court, District of Vermont (USBC-VT) has been hearing from court users who are eager to begin electronic filing. In the last edition of this newsletter, we reported a start date of November 5, 2001, so understandably, many folks are wondering what has happened.

The implementation delay can be summed up in two words: technical difficulties. Because the USBC-VT believes that good communication with court users is of paramount importance - both in general and with regard to implementation of CM/ECF - we want to provide you with a more detailed explanation of the delay and an update as to where the project stands.

Most importantly, the technical difficulties are not related to the ability of court users to operate the program from their offices. From that standpoint, we could have moved forward with CM/ECF implementation in early November, as planned. The challenge we are currently addressing is internal and relates to the concept of becoming a genuinely paperless docketing and filing system. We hope to resolve this issue and go live with CM/ECF within the next 90 days.

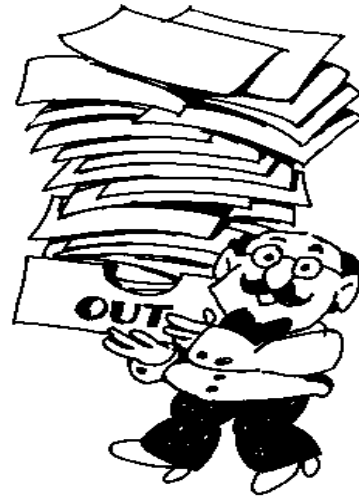
Petitions, pleadings, and other documents filed with the court routinely move through several staff members, including the judge, as part of their processing. Often, one staff member will need to pass along special instructions or additional information to the next person who handles the document. When handling paper documents, this kind of communication is as simple as affixing a "sticky note" to the document and passing it along. With electronic documents, the process is not quite as simple. The current edition of CM/ECF allows for electronic communication between employees but does not contain the mechanisms needed to communicate in a way that the USBC-VT finds sufficiently secure, paperless, and efficient. The court's automation staff is currently working on a solution that will streamline the process for moving documents through CM/ECF within the court, minimize the amount of paper needed during the life of the case, and guarantee the necessary security of internal CM/ECF communications.

It is worth mentioning that, were the USBC-VT not committed to the paperless environment promised by CM/ECF, we could simply print out the document in question, write and attach a note to the paper, then send it on its way. But this short term solution would undercut the fundamental purpose of CM/ECF. When the USBC-VT committed to CM/ECF, it committed wholeheartedly. We want to do it right the first time, even if that means delaying implementation,

rather than achieve only some of the potential benefits of CM/ECF.

We appreciate the fact that so many court users have returned their readiness surveys. We have all these surveys on file and will use them when we resume contact for on-site tutorials. As soon as the court completes the technical revisions it deems necessary, we will be in touch with you to schedule CM/ECF training. In the meantime, we thank you for your patience. Together, we can make CM/ECF a resounding success, one that will increase convenience and efficiency for court users and employees alike.

**CM/ECF:
(almost)
No More Paper!**



Comments or Questions?

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